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Chairman: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

Contents

Agenda item 128: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (*continued*)

Revised estimates relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, section 3, Political affairs, section 28D, Office of Central Support Services and section 35, Staff assessment, related to the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 128: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (*continued*)

Revised estimates relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, section 3, Political affairs, section 28D, Office of Central Support Services and section 35, Staff assessment, related to the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs (A/62/7/Add.32 and A/62/521 and Corr.1; A/C.5/62/24 and A/C.5/62/25)

1. **Ms. Bárcena** (Under-Secretary-General for Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates under sections 1, 3, 28D and 35 related to the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs (A/62/521 and Corr.1), recalled that the Secretary-General had stressed the inseparable link between peace and security, human rights and development, and had confirmed his intention to keep engaging the general membership on the reform and strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other departments. The Organization had already begun the difficult work of institutional strengthening and reform and had reorganized its worldwide peacekeeping operations. It was time to turn its attention to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, with special emphasis on Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and to rethink its approach to preventive diplomacy. The Organization should exploit to the fullest its potential for good offices and international mediation in the broadest spirit of the Charter.

2. The Secretary-General's proposals explained how the Organization intended to address the imbalance between the demands placed on the United Nations and the means to carry them out. Through strengthening the Department of Political Affairs, the Secretariat would become a more proactive and effective platform for preventive diplomacy and good offices, including mediation in the service of Member States and would also be in a better position to work closely in partnership with Member States and other international and regional organizations.

3. First, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/220, the declaration on enhancing United Nations-African Union cooperation within the framework of the 10-year capacity-building programme, and the joint communiqué issued by the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, the Secretary-General proposed that the United Nations Liaison Office in Addis Ababa should be reinforced and renamed the Peace and Security Support Office to the African Union Commission.

4. Second, regional divisions would be strengthened to improve monitoring and analysis, policy formulation and rapid dispatch to support the early resolution of conflicts and good offices efforts. Third, policy planning and mediation support would be strengthened through the establishment of a Policy, Partnerships and Mediation Support Division with a view to improving the Organization's ability to assist Member States on a wide range of cross-cutting global issues and to make preventive diplomacy systematic and effective. It would also enhance the links to the rest of the United Nations system and ensure better synergies and joint efforts.

5. Fourth, the increasing requests for technical assistance by the Electoral Assistance Division required the proposed adjustment to its resources. Fifth, the Security Council Affairs Division would be strengthened to meet increased demands in support of the Security Council, with its rapidly expanding workload. Lastly, management, executive and oversight functions needed to be tightened by refocusing the work of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and reinforcing the Department's Executive Office.

6. Overall, the proposals to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs would result in additional requirements of $21,036,100 for the biennium 2008-2009, with the addition of 101 posts. An increase of $14,276,100 would be required under section 3, Political affairs, reflecting the proposed addition of 96 posts and the redeployment and reclassification of posts as well as non-post requirements such as travel and operating expenses. An increase of $439,200 would arise under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, pertaining to the proposed establishment of five new posts and reclassification of the Head of the United Nations Liaison Office in Addis Ababa. An increase of $4,184,700 would arise under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, representing common support services for the proposed additional staff. An increase of $2,136,100 would arise under section 35,

Staff assessment, based on the proposed establishment of new posts, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those resource implications were summarized in paragraphs 15 to 20 and tables 1 to 4 of the report. The action requested of the General Assembly was presented in paragraph 355.

7. **Mr. Pascoe** (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that the Secretary-General had identified the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs as an important part of his broader vision for strengthening the Organization in all its pillars. The rationale and detailed proposals were contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/62/521 and Corr.1). The proposals constituted a vital complement to the earlier reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Organization needed to become more effective not only at stabilizing conflict situations and dealing with their humanitarian side effects, but also at preventing and resolving them through political means, as prescribed in the Charter.

8. The Secretary-General's proposals responded, in particular, to the call for more effective use of such tools as preventive diplomacy, mediation and the good offices of the Secretary-General in the service of Member States and partners in regional organizations. The Secretary-General wanted a United Nations that could act quickly and effectively in the field. Recent experience in Kenya, with the rapid deployment of the Department's staff to Nairobi at the request of the African Union-led mediation team, was a good example. The Department's political and electoral experts had made critical contributions to averting a larger tragedy. At the same time, the Department's role in Kenya had underscored the limitations it faced. Mobilizing just a few key staff members to Nairobi had proved to be a major strain on the regional divisions for Africa, and had resulted in greatly diminished attention to other critical situations. The need to respond to short-term crises often prevented the Department from focusing on such longer-term issues as planning, training, effective management, the building of synergies with regional organizations and ensuring coherence with other parts of the United Nations system.

9. The constraints facing the Department had been well documented in reports and evaluations that attested to an unsustainable trend of rising responsibilities and zero growth in resources. The result was a political department unable to consistently perform the kind of analysis, diplomatic engagement and coordination required for successful preventive diplomacy.

10. The Department felt those limitations in particular at Headquarters, where responsibilities for managing and overseeing sensitive diplomatic initiatives and field operations had grown enormously. According to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), there had been a six-fold increase since 1990 in United Nations preventive diplomacy missions and there was no reason to expect that demand to decrease. Meanwhile, the Department had continued to shoulder its other substantial everyday responsibilities in New York, including servicing committees of the General Assembly and the Security Council, and carrying out its role as the political and diplomatic support structure for the Secretary-General. Resources dedicated to those essential functions competed for attention devoted to policy analysis for preventive diplomacy, as well as to the oversight and management of political missions in the field. The Department also faced increased requests from other parts of the United Nations system for political advice.

11. Accordingly, the Secretary-General was proposing a number of steps to strengthen the Department. First, he was proposing a substantial strengthening of the regional divisions, along with some reorganization for greater efficiency. Second, he was seeking support for establishment of an integrated Policy, Partnerships and Mediation Support Division, which would help the Organization to be more systematic in carrying out mediation efforts and would increase the Department's capacity to work on cross-cutting issues affecting peace and security. That division would also play a critical role in enhancing the professionalism of the entire Department. Third, he was requesting additional resources to strengthen the Security Council Subsidiary Organs Branch and the Electoral Assistance Division in order to meet continued strong demand for their services from Member States and to respond to OIOS recommendations. Finally, he was requesting posts to enhance the Department's management, evaluation, oversight and communications capacity.

12. Under the Secretary-General's proposals, the Department's staffing would increase by just over a hundred posts, from the current base of 223. The total cost was estimated at $21 million for the 2008-2009

biennium. The Secretary-General had also outlined — in concept only — the establishment of a limited network of regional offices, in consultation with Member States.

13. Throughout discussions with the Committee over recent months, there had been strong expressions of support for the strengthening of the Department. There seemed to be a consensus on the importance of preventive diplomacy and of the wisdom of sharpening the diplomatic tools of the Secretary-General. At the same time, the Department had noted the concerns raised by delegations — both with the content of the Secretary-General's proposal and with the process itself. Some of those issues had been addressed in the recent exchange of letters between the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement and the Secretary-General.

14. With regard to regional offices, it was important to stress that they would be opened only at the request of the host country and all others in the region, on the basis of an appropriate mandate. It was clear that there could be no single approach given the diversity of clients. Partnerships and coordination with regional and subregional organizations would have greater immediacy and relevance in some areas than the prevention of conflict. The Department would also work to become more diverse: in staffing new posts, priority would be given to women and men from underrepresented countries in accordance with the targets established by the General Assembly for both gender balance and geographical representation.

15. With regard to the regional divisions within the Department, the sections and units proposed in the Secretary-General's report could be easily changed in the light of alternative proposals. As for cross-cutting issues, the Department did not seek to duplicate capacity that existed elsewhere in the system. Decisions by Member States to create new bodies covering cross-cutting issues, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, resulted in greater, not fewer, demands on the Department, since the outputs and decisions of those bodies must include political inputs. Many cross-cutting issues were the subject of regular debate in the General Assembly and other legislative bodies, as well as of expectations that the Secretary-General should develop positions and advise Member States on the impact of such issues on peace and security.

16. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/62/7/Add.32), said that a major part of the additional resources requested by the Secretary-General, $14.3 million out of the total of $21 million, related to section 3, Political affairs.

17. The Advisory Committee recognized that there were organizational and resource constraints in certain areas of the Department of Political Affairs which impeded its ability to fulfil its tasks. While the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of some additional capacity, it cautioned against the fragmentation of the regional divisions into a multiplicity of units, since that could make it difficult to deploy staff as emerging needs arose, and could lead to requests for additional senior posts to head new units. In addition, given the work of existing regional organizations in several areas, the Advisory Committee considered that it would be more efficient, in those cases, to deal with issues in an integrated manner instead of on a country-specific basis.

18. The Advisory Committee had previously pointed out the need to consider possible synergies, not just between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, but also among all departments of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, regional commissions and other actors of the United Nations system, including country teams, in order to achieve efficiencies and/or savings, instead of resorting to requests for additional resources. In carrying out its functions it was important for the Department to take full cognizance of the competence of other relevant entities with a comparative advantage. In some regions, the Department should complement, rather than duplicate, the work already done by competent regional and subregional organizations involved in peace and security.

19. While noting that operational arrangements between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had improved, the Advisory Committee was of the opinion that various issues needed to be addressed and reported on to the General Assembly. Those included the development of clear criteria and transparent decision-

making mechanisms to determine the lead department for special political missions in the field, as well as a clear definition of the respective roles of the two Departments in providing support for special political missions. In addition, the development of a methodology for support arrangements for special political missions, indicated by the Secretary-General in his report on special political missions (A/62/512), should take full account of recent measures such as the strengthening of the capacity of United Nations peace operations, any decisions that the General Assembly might take on the current proposals for strengthening the Department of Political Affairs, and lessons learned in supporting peace operations.

20. The Advisory Committee agreed with OIOS that merely adding staff was insufficient to ensure the fulfilment of mandates. A qualitative transformation of the work processes of the Department was required, with a human resources strategy that addressed requisite skill sets for the staff, as well as training.

21. The Advisory Committee took note of the proposed regional approach to preventive diplomacy and mediation as an important element in the Department's work. However, with regard to the Secretary-General's intention to develop a larger network of regional field presences, there was a need to avoid a fragmented and piecemeal approach. The Advisory Committee expected that the Secretary-General would provide a detailed comprehensive proposal on the strengthening of regional field presences, including information on the justification for the establishment of such offices, the procedures for approval by the appropriate legislative bodies, the process for consulting Member States in the area of focus, the functions envisaged for such offices, and the interaction and coordination mechanisms with the other entities present in the field, such as peacekeeping operations, special envoys, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, the Peacebuilding Support Office, and regional organizations, as well as on the organizational and financial arrangements envisaged.

22. In conclusion, the Advisory Committee's recommendations would involve an overall reduction of $8.1 million in the additional estimate of $21 million requested by the Secretary-General and a reduction of 41 posts in the 101 additional posts proposed.

23. **Ms. Simkić** (Slovenia), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, Liechtenstein and Ukraine, said that the European Union attached great importance to the role of the United Nations in preventing and resolving conflicts, and strongly supported the work of the Organization in the area of preventive diplomacy. While reiterating its concern at the piecemeal approach to the regular budget for 2008-2009, the European Union recognized that there were organizational and resource constraints in the Department of Political Affairs that limited its capacity to fulfil its functions, and looked forward to discussing the proposal before the Committee on their merits. The aim, in strengthening the Department, was to fill gaps, avoid duplication and ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding across the United Nations system. The common objective should be to ensure that the Organization as a whole was able to deliver in the best and most efficient manner. Cost-effective management and how to manage the process of change were key elements.

24. **Mr. Hunte** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the strengthening of the United Nations and the development of the Organization's full potential on the basis of priorities and mandates approved by Member States. A reformed United Nations must be responsive to the entire membership, faithful to its founding principles and adapted to carrying out its mandate. The success of reform could only be judged in terms of a collective assessment of the improved functioning of the Organization. A stronger United Nations that responded more effectively to the collective needs of all Members was in the common interest.

25. The Group shared the view that improving the Organization's capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts was a better investment than dealing with the costly aftermath of wars and armed conflicts. Efforts to enhance the role of the United Nations in preventing conflict should be balanced, comprehensive, and in full accordance with the Charter and international law, and must go hand in hand with parallel efforts to address the root causes of conflict, in particular by achieving

sustainable development through sustained economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

26. The Group expected to start consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals on strengthening the development pillar of the Organization and urged the Advisory Committee to report thereon as a matter of priority, taking into account the interrelation between those proposals and the proposals on strengthening the capacity of the Department of Political Affairs in the areas of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. The Group firmly believed that a stronger United Nations needed a stronger development pillar because there could be no peace without development.

27. The Group had carefully considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/521 and Corr.1). It welcomed some elements of the proposals but also had significant concerns, which were reflected in the letter dated 7 March 2008 from the co-chairmen of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and China addressed to the Secretary-General (A/C.5/62/24) requesting a corrigendum. The Group expressed its disappointment that the Secretariat had not complied with its request. The Secretary-General's report contained political judgements that might have counterproductive consequences and a number of the proposals had no intergovernmental mandate. The views, priorities and role of developing countries, including their contribution to conflict prevention and resolution, were not adequately reflected in the report. Clarification was therefore needed of some of the proposals to allow Member States to make an informed decision.

28. The objective of strengthening and rationalizing the Department, including its supportive role in conflict prevention and resolution, was to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The Department's mandate had been established by the decisions of Member States, as should any change in its mandate and structure. The Group welcomed the assurances by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs contained in his letter dated 11 March 2008 addressed to the co-chairmen of the Joint Coordinating Committee (A/C.5/62/25) that the proposals of the Secretary-General did not entail any expansion of the functions already assigned to the Department. However, the Group would like more information from OIOS on that issue, as well as an indication of which department in the Organization was responsible for special political missions.

29. With regard to the establishment of regional offices, the Group concurred in the observations of the Advisory Committee (A/62/7/Add.32, para. 23). The establishment of such offices would require an appropriate mandate from the General Assembly, covering only the countries of the region in question and implemented with the agreement of all States involved. That should be done on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the specificities of the various regions and in full respect for the principles of sovereignty and independence.

30. While the Group welcomed the assurance given by the Under-Secretary-General that no specific request for resources to establish regional offices was being made, and that there was no set formula for how those offices would conduct their work, it recalled that in the fact sheet on the Department's website dated 25 October 2007 the key elements of the plan to strengthen the Department included rationalizing its field presence through the establishment, in close consultation with Member States, of a limited network of regional offices that would assist Member States and regional organizations with preventive diplomatic efforts. The Group expected an explanation of the apparent contradiction.

31. Similarly, the Group had concerns regarding some of the proposals for restructuring the regional divisions within the Department. It fully agreed with the Advisory Committee that some divisions did not warrant the proposed multiplicity of units and would benefit more from an issue-oriented approach. The indication by the Under-Secretary-General that the Department would continue the current practice of using flexible teams rather than dividing each regional division into formal sections and units required clarification.

32. The Group reiterated the importance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, with a view to rectifying the current imbalance in the Department. Citizens of the regions in question were the most knowledgeable about their regions. Simply giving priority to women and men from underrepresented countries did not address the Group's concerns and might even accentuate the current imbalance.

33. The report of the Secretary-General lacked detailed information on the Department's mandates regarding policy planning and cross-cutting issues, as

did the Under-Secretary-General's letter. Further information was needed on the mandates approved by Member States in connection with the Department's expansion of functions and mandates in the area of cross-cutting issues, as well as on the demands on the Department for political advice from United Nations bodies with relevant established mandates. Finally, the fact sheet dated 25 October 2007 also referred to a follow-up proposal for a support account to be submitted at a later stage, a proposal which would require appropriate consideration.

34. **Mr. McNee** (Canada), speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ), said that the prevention of violent conflict and the peaceful settlement of disputes were central to the mandate of the United Nations. The CANZ delegations had long supported the Organization's efforts in that regard.

35. Preventive diplomacy lay at the very core of the United Nations Charter. The Security Council and the General Assembly had expanded the Organization's mandates relating to preventive diplomacy, and both Member States and regional organizations had made increasing demands on the Department of Political Affairs in support of their own efforts to prevent conflict. While the Department had achieved a great deal, despite limited resources, a growing number of reports, dating back to the Brahimi report of 2000, had shown that it was simply not equipped to provide the strategic leadership needed for the Organization to truly engage in preventive diplomacy.

36. The CANZ delegations were pleased that the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/62/521 and Corr.1) focused on three key elements, namely reconfiguring the structure of the Department to make it more field-oriented; providing adequate resources for preventive diplomacy; and ensuring improved cooperation with partners both within and without the Organization.

37. It was important for the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs to improve the functioning of the Organization itself. There was a need for better coordination across the United Nations system in addressing potential conflict situations and for reassurance that the Department of Political Affairs was working effectively, not only with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, but also with the wide range of actors within the United Nations system. The Advisory Committee had raised a number of valid concerns in that regard.

38. The CANZ delegations were committed to equipping the Secretariat with the resources needed to effectively and efficiently carry out its activities. While additional resources were needed, they would seek assurances that all possibilities for reallocation had been exhausted and that the requests for additional resources had been carefully analysed.

39. The CANZ countries agreed that additional resources should be allocated to the Asia and Pacific Division and the Africa Divisions and that the Asia and Pacific Division should be split into two. They also supported strengthening the Mediation Support Unit and the Electoral Assistance Division, as those bodies performed difficult tasks, with limited resources.

40. **Mr. Lima** (Cape Verde), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Political Affairs to prevent and resolve conflicts.

41. Because there were more conflicts in Africa than in any other continent, conflict prevention and resolution could not be treated exclusively within the general framework contained in the Secretary-General's proposals — Africa must receive special consideration. The causes of conflict, such as poverty, weak economic systems, unstable democratic institutions and development, needed to be addressed squarely. The Group looked forward to a strengthened partnership between the Department and the African Union in supporting elections, combating poverty, protecting refugees and preventing the spread of violence.

42. Preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution required a corresponding increase in resources. The African Group noted with concern that the Advisory Committee had recommended against many of the posts requested for Africa and looked forward to hearing the Secretariat's views on the impact of those recommendations.

43. The Group was equally concerned at the proposal for the establishment of regional offices — such offices could not be set up without the approval of the country concerned and the endorsement of the General Assembly, and their authority could not extend beyond the borders of the country in question.

44. The African Group attached great importance to equitable geographical distribution, a cardinal principle of the United Nations Charter. The strengthening of the Department must take into account the need to redress the current imbalance.

45. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the Group recognized the importance of mechanisms to strengthen the Organization's preventive diplomacy capacity; it also acknowledged that the ability of the Department of Political Affairs to carry out its functions effectively was undermined by resource constraints and structural limitations.

46. He regretted that the political elements contained in the Secretary-General's report had not been discussed in another forum. The Fifth Committee should consider only the financial and budgetary aspects of the proposals.

47. The Group noted with great concern incorrect references and inappropriate judgements concerning the Latin American and Caribbean region. It had pointed out the errors to the Secretariat for correction.

48. The Group concurred in the Secretary-General's proposal to establish an independent Americas Division but did not agree with the proposed sections. It would be more logical to divide the Division into three rather than four sections, namely North America; South America; and Central America and the Caribbean.

49. The Group trusted that the Department of Political Affairs, in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, would pay appropriate attention to Haiti — the only Rio Group country on the Security Council agenda — particularly in the area of electoral assistance. Through its Americas Division, the Department must coordinate with regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), as well as subregional organizations. Latin America already possessed the necessary political instruments to deal with specific political issues.

50. While the Advisory Committee's report (A/62/7/Add.32) provided a good basis for discussion, the proposals required further analysis and should take into account the strengthening of other departments, particularly the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and the possibility of establishing synergies with other entities in the United Nations system. That was particularly important, given that the rationale behind the proposal was to make the Department of Political Affairs more field-oriented.

51. The Group was not convinced that it would be beneficial or relevant to establish a regional office in Latin America. The establishment of regional offices in other regions should be approved only with the consent of the States involved, in full coordination with the competent regional bodies. The Group concurred with the Advisory Committee that full information should be provided on the justification for the establishment of such offices; the procedures for their approval by the appropriate legislative bodies; and the process for seeking the views of Member States.

52. **Ms. Juul** (Norway), speaking also on behalf of Iceland, said that Norway supported the Secretary-General's desire to reform and strengthen the Department of Political Affairs. However, the Secretariat must assure Member States that existing resources were being utilized fully and that possible efficiencies and/or savings were being explored.

53. Norway concurred with the Advisory Committee that it was necessary to broaden collaboration by the Department of Political Affairs with the rest of the United Nations system. The regional divisions of the Department should be strengthened, with a view to improving such collaboration and avoiding duplication.

54. Norway agreed with the Advisory Committee that the respective roles of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Field Support needed to be clarified. She requested details of the Departments' efforts to establish the terms of reference for cooperation on field missions.

55. Norway would also welcome the development of a methodology for support arrangements for special political missions. It was important to employ best practices to secure a results-based culture.

56. Despite repeated calls for equitable geographical representation, some countries, including Norway, continued to be underrepresented in the Department. Reform and strengthening should take into account the need to meet geographical targets and achieve gender balance.

57. Norway welcomed the proposal to establish a Policy, Partnerships and Mediation Support Division. It should work closely with similar units in the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Group, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other parts of the United Nations system.

58. **Mr. Kim** Hyun Chong (Republic of Korea) said that the peacekeeping budget for 2007-2008 amounted to nearly $7 billion and was expected to increase further during 2008-2009. While the management of ongoing conflicts and peacebuilding were being given the necessary attention, the importance of preventing conflicts had been underestimated; preventing disputes from escalating into violent conflicts was a better way to secure international peace and security than post-conflict measures — preventive diplomacy was a core function of the United Nations.

59. The proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report were appropriate, relevant and timely. At the same time, his delegation would appreciate receiving a cost-benefits analysis of the proposed measures. It would also be useful if the Secretariat could provide examples of successful preventive diplomacy.

60. In its audit of the management of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs (A/61/357), the Office of Internal Oversight Services had stated that the mandates and capacities of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations presented an inherent risk of duplication and overlap for the political affairs functions in their regional divisions. The Secretariat should therefore specify more clearly the scope and role of each Department. Korea concurred with the Advisory Committee that fragmentation of the regional divisions, which could lead to structural rigidity, should be avoided. Consideration should be given to possible synergies between the Department of Political Affairs, the specialized agencies and other relevant entities.

61. **Mr. Rosales Díaz** (Nicaragua), speaking also on behalf of Bolivia, said that his delegation agreed that certain gaps in the Department of Political Affairs needed to be addressed. However, there was no clear mandate from the Assembly to carry out the restructuring proposed in the Secretary-General's report. What was more, the report reflected an astonishing lack of judgement, political sense — or even common sense — with respect to certain regions. The preparation of the revised estimates should have been monitored more carefully.

62. The Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement had asked for a corrigendum to be issued, so as to enable the Fifth Committee to concentrate on financial and administrative matters rather than contentious political issues. However, that had not been done. The Department claimed that there had not been sufficient time and that the issuance of the corrigendum would have set an unfortunate precedent. Those arguments were not valid, and in fact the Secretariat had already issued one corrigendum to the report. It was clear there had been a lack of transparency, and that a limited number of delegations had put undue pressure on the Secretariat.

63. Regarding the efforts to ensure synergies among the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, a large number of mechanisms for interaction had not yet been defined. His delegation was concerned at the comment by the Office of Internal Oversight Services that the reporting lines in special political missions remained uncertain.

64. The division of work among the various Departments needed to be clarified and development bodies such as the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Development Programme also needed to coordinate their efforts and objectives.

65. Efforts to increase the Organization's preventive diplomacy capacity must take into account the social and economic problems that were central to many conflicts. It was essential to strengthen development activities, bearing in mind the close connection between peace, development and respect for human rights.

66. He agreed that the establishment of regional offices required the approval of the General Assembly — the only universal legislative body with the requisite political authority — as well as the explicit consent of the States concerned.

67. The Secretary-General's report contained a series of erroneous political analyses, particularly with respect to the Americas. The errors were likely due to a lack of capacity in the Department, but also to the fallacy that, when left-wing governments were elected democratically, citizens suffered "growing

disappointment with the dividends of democracy". Such statements were counterproductive and historically inaccurate.

68. His delegation concurred in the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning the capacity of the Americas Division. The Division required genuine equitable geographical representation, particularly of nationals from developing countries, so that the staff would understand the region.

69. Nicaragua firmly opposed the establishment of any regional or subregional office in the Americas. If a country agreed to the establishment of an office of the Department of Political Affairs in its territory, the office should be national, not regional or subregional.

70. Lastly, at the Rio Group Summit held in the Dominican Republic at the beginning of March, the countries of the Americas had demonstrated unequivocally that they were capable of promptly resolving any crisis without outside interference. They would continue to focus on strengthening their regional mechanisms for political dialogue and preventing any form of external interference.

71. **Mr. Davide** (Philippines), speaking also on behalf of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand, said that any steps to implement the Secretary-General's suggestion to establish regional offices as part of the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs should be approved by the General Assembly, and the Member States concerned should be fully apprised of the regional offices' objectives and functions and of their related organizational and financial arrangements. For the sake of transparency and avoiding duplication, full information should be provided about the interaction of each proposed regional office with other United Nations entities in the field, including funds and programmes, peacekeeping operations and special envoys. More specifically, the suggestion to establish a regional office in South-East Asia should be discussed with the Member States in the area, and their full consent should be obtained. In that connection, the Secretariat should explain how the office would relate to the existing regional organization in the area.

72. The delegations concerned welcomed the clarifications on the establishment of regional offices provided by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs in his letter of 11 March 2008 to the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China (A/C.5/62/25). They particularly valued the assurance that the offices would be opened only with the prior consent of the host country and all other countries in the region, and with an appropriate mandate as established by Member States, on a case-by-case basis. They had also noted that the regional offices would have no extraterritorial role, and that the report of the Secretary-General had neither made an exhaustive list of potential regional offices nor made a specific request for funding. They looked forward to continued transparent and open interaction that would provide Member States with full information on the efforts to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs and therefore facilitate informed decisions on the part of affected Member States.

73. **Mr. İlkin** (Turkey) said that his delegation, having supported the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union, wished to reiterate the importance it attached to strengthening the Department of Political Affairs, which acted as the operational arm of the Secretary-General's good offices efforts and preventive action, and provided an overall strategy for countries in conflict or emerging from conflict.

74. As OIOS had indicated in its report on the audit of the management of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs (A/61/357), the Department's financial resources had not expanded at the same pace as its activities, presenting a serious challenge to its capacity to fulfil its functions and mandates. It was preferable to have access to resources to resolve disputes at an early stage and thus prevent larger, more acute and more complex conflicts from erupting. Greater mobility and presence in the field were important to cope with such situations and enable the Organization to act as a more proactive and effective platform for preventive diplomacy, good offices and mediation.

75. The current proposal to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs, which required the allocation of funds, deserved careful and positive attention. Naturally, the Organization should try to find ways to redeploy staff from within the United Nations system to understaffed units, instead of directly creating new posts. As the Advisory Committee had suggested in its report (A/62/7/Add.32), coordination and cooperation among United Nations entities was

needed to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication and overlap.

76. It was important to find the right combination and balance between budgetary discipline and the effective conduct of political affairs, remembering the important and urgent need to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs and that Department's influence on the success of the Organization.

77. **Mr. Rashkow** (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly supported the mandate of the Department of Political Affairs, which sought to prevent and resolve conflicts before they escalated and required the establishment of peacekeeping operations. While also acknowledging the need to strengthen the Department, his delegation believed that a number of matters should be considered before action could be taken on the proposals in the report of the Secretary-General. As the Advisory Committee had pointed out in its report, the Secretariat had failed to address a number of concerns.

78. Several OIOS reports had raised the issue of how the Department's functions and activities were defined, and how they related to the functions and activities of other United Nations entities. Moreover, as both OIOS and the Advisory Committee had noted, there was no clear division of labour between the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and other bodies, including the Peacebuilding Support Office. The questions and concerns of all Member States should be fully addressed before the Committee could conclude its review of the Secretary-General's proposals.

79. Lastly, the proposals for strengthening the Department of Political Affairs, like other proposals, should be considered in the context of the Organization's budget. The piecemeal, ad hoc approach towards the current budget was inconsistent with sound budgeting practices, and the Secretariat had identified more than $1 billion in potential add-ons to the initial budget adopted in December 2007. Approval of those add-ons would result in the biggest ever increase in the United Nations budget — some 25 per cent — and the largest ever United Nations budget. In that context, his delegation had hoped that when presenting proposals requiring additional resources, the Secretary-General might have identified offsetting savings and efficiencies.

80. **Mr. Sadouk** (Morocco) said he wished to assure the Secretary-General of his delegation's support for reform of the Organization, which should be given the resources to respond more effectively to emerging needs and challenges on the basis of the priorities and mandates determined by the Member States. His delegation particularly supported preventive diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, believing that the Organization's capacities in that regard should be improved through action that was the subject of agreement, balanced and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the decisions and mandates of the Member States.

81. While some proposals for strengthening the Department of Political Affairs in the report of the Secretary-General were positive, others should be clarified so that the Member States could take well-informed decisions. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs had provided further information in his letter to the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China (A/C.5/62/25), but his delegation wondered about the reference, in the report of the Secretary-General, to expanding the activities of the Department to encompass cross-cutting issues such as climate change, democracy, terrorism, transnational organized crime, corruption, drug trafficking, security, radical ideology and fundamentalism, and migration. The necessary consensus on those issues had not been built up, and they were in any case usually dealt with in other bodies.

82. Within the Department itself, his delegation wished to see a greater presence of nationals of developing States, with priority given to successful candidates from the national competitive examination. Regional offices of the Department should be established only on the basis of an appropriate mandate and only with the approval of the host country and the support of the Member States in the region concerned. Regional offices should have no extraterritorial powers.

83. **Mr. Mukai** (Japan) said that his delegation wished to focus on consistency and efficiency in the field and at Headquarters, as well as budgetary discipline. His delegation understood the importance of conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy and mediation and the need for a presence in the field for those purposes. However, consistency and efficiency should be pursued in the area of peace and security as a

whole. Peacekeeping operations and special political missions currently lacked any clear criteria or consistent definition. In leading such missions, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should have a well-thought-out and clearly defined division of labour, and any reforms should be consistent with that principle. The establishment of field offices should take full account of the presence of other offices, including not only peacekeeping operations, but also the offices of funds and programmes.

84. At Headquarters, meanwhile, the regional divisions of the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of Operations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations lacked communication and coordination. As OIOS had indicated in its report on the audit of the management of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs (A/61/357), there was a risk that the resources of both Departments could be dedicated to performing the same tasks. Rather than making excessive requests for additional posts, the two departments should redeploy political affairs officers flexibly. However, it was positive that most of the posts requested were at the P-2 to P-4 levels, contributing to the rejuvenation of the Organization.

85. Lastly, it was a matter of concern that the restructuring of the departments of the Secretariat had been proposed piecemeal over the last year, moving from peacekeeping operations to political affairs and on to the development pillar, thus seriously undermining the Secretary-General's accountability to Member States. Following established practice, the Secretary-General's reform plans should have been presented as a whole in the budget for the biennium, with requirements carefully selected, applying appropriate budgetary discipline, and with a focus on high priorities and the redeployment of resources from obsolete activities.

86. **Ms. Ávila** (Panama) said that her delegation supported the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs, believing that preventive diplomacy should be given a larger role, so that disputes did not degenerate into conflict which endangered international peace and security and caused material damage and loss of life.

87. The political aspects of the Secretary-General's proposals should be carefully analysed before being considered by the Fifth Committee, which, it must be remembered, was an administrative and technical body. With regard to the substance of the proposals, her delegation was in favour of increasing the Department's regional presence in Africa and in other regions in need of support and advice from the United Nations system. Resources should be used rationally, with action complementing that of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the specialized agencies and the funds and programmes.

88. Regional offices should only be opened with the consent of the host country and of the countries of the area, and in accordance with regional needs and the legislative mandates of the decision-making entities. Her delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding the justification of new regional offices. The criteria used to determine whether or not the regional offices referred to in the proposals of the Secretary-General were warranted should be more precisely determined. Her delegation was in favour of the establishment of an office for the Latin America/Caribbean regions. It should be appropriately staffed to carry out specialized, technical assignments.

89. The staff of the Department of Political Affairs should have a wider geographical and gender balance. Qualified staff from the appropriate region should be recruited for its various regional divisions. Lastly, the Electoral Assistance Division should be given sufficient resources to support the electoral assistance efforts of United Nations missions and electoral assistance projects of the United Nations Development Programme, in order to encourage emerging democracies.

90. **Mr. Ren** Yisheng (China) said that his delegation supported necessary and rational steps to reform the Organization in order to enhance management and efficiency. The process should be guided by the principle of consensus and carried out step by step, without undermining the General Assembly's decision-making power over resource allocation and human resources policy.

91. Also supporting the positive role of the United Nations in safeguarding international peace and security in accordance with its Charter, his delegation believed that a reasonable increase of input in the areas of prevention and mediation, for example to strengthen early warning mechanisms and fact-finding missions, would have a positive effect on conflict prevention and

resolution, provided that the Security Council retained its leading role in that regard. As many international flashpoints were closely linked to the issue of development, the Organization should vigorously reinforce its development activities and pay close attention to post-conflict peacebuilding.

92. In recent years, the Department of Political Affairs had been increasingly busy dealing with preventive diplomacy, good offices efforts of the Secretary-General and mediation. His delegation therefore favoured strengthening the Department through restructuring and a greater number of posts, and believed that the Member States' decisions in that regard would be assisted by the recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding such matters as staffing, integrated rather than country-by-country management of activities, establishment of regional offices and enhancing coordination with peacekeeping operations, special envoys and United Nations development agencies. In restructuring its regional divisions, the Department should aim to be streamlined and efficient, and avoid fragmentation and overstaffing. The establishment of regional offices should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, in the light of actual needs, with the consent of the countries of the region concerned and in accordance with the mandate of the General Assembly and the principle of consensus.

93. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation supported all genuine reform efforts aimed at making the Organization more effective, democratic, collective and transparent, at enabling it to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, at implementing the legislative mandates established by the Member States and at responding to long-standing calls for comprehensive restructuring. Those efforts must be transparent and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the wishes of its main bodies, chiefly the General Assembly.

94. In that connection, the Secretary-General should consult the Member States before making any proposals which affected their interests. That applied especially to the report which the Committee was currently considering, as the Department of Political Affairs was one of the most important in the Organization, having a key role in the central principle of preserving international peace and security and being called upon to fulfil the mandates established by the Security Council and the General Assembly. However, while the Department had become more active everywhere in its main function — preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes — it was unfortunately devoting less attention to the situation in the Middle East, particularly the peace process. Although the region had been a major focus of the Organization's activities since its inception, it was becoming less so.

95. As the title of the report of the Secretary-General indicated, more resources were being sought in order to increase staffing and achieve restructuring in the Department, though without changing its legal mandates. If any new legislative mandates were contemplated, the approval of the General Assembly must be sought. While many of the proposals in the report were administrative or financial, others related to sensitive political issues, requiring more consultation of the Member States.

96. As an example, his delegation took the view that establishing a new Middle East and West Asia Division divided into Middle East and Gulf sections had no basis in logic or in the realities of the Middle East. His delegation's view had been transmitted to the Department of Political Affairs and recognized as valid and well founded, and he trusted that it would be reflected in a revised version of the report once the Committee had completed discussions. Concern over the proposals for the restructuring of the Department's regional divisions had been expressed in the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the co-chairmen of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement (A/C.5/62/24). His delegation had noted with concern that the request for a corrigendum to the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/521 and Corr.1) contained in the attachment to that letter had not been acted upon, perhaps because of the ongoing discussion in the Fifth Committee. He wished to reiterate that if the Secretary-General routinely consulted the Member States before formulating new proposals, no corrigendums would be necessary.

97. The Department of Political Affairs was far from achieving equitable geographical representation among its staff, with many being from particular States. His delegation wished to see more staff members from developing countries, particularly Arab States, especially in the light of the Department's role of supporting not just the activities of the Security Council, but also those of the General Assembly.

Examples included the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the register of damage in connection with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem and the Decolonization Unit.

98. **Mr. Butagira** (Uganda) said that the maintenance of international peace and security was not only a core Charter obligation for all Member States, but also one of the three pillars of the Organization's work. The importance of preventive diplomacy, through mediation and the enhanced use of good offices, could therefore not be overstated. The report of the Secretary-General under discussion was a good starting point for the General Assembly to propose workable recommendations on how to further that principle.

99. The Secretary-General's intention to rationalize the Department's presence in the field through the establishment of a small network of regional offices had been duly noted. However, while commending the intention to establish a regional office in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, his delegation concurred in the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in paragraph 23 of its report (A/62/7/Add.32): the process for seeking the views of Member States and regional organizations, where such regional offices were to be established, must be transparent, in particular in connection with the establishment of the proposed office in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region.

100. The Secretary-General, through his Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas, was to be commended on the important role that he had played in the Juba peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army. As a result, there were real prospects that a comprehensive peace agreement would be signed in the near future. However, in view of the fact that the talks had reached a conclusive stage, there was little value in the Secretary-General's proposal for an additional Political Affairs Officer (P-4) to work exclusively on supporting the peace process in northern Uganda.

101. **Ms. Dinić** (Croatia) said that her delegation supported the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs, which should improve United Nations capacity in the field of conflict prevention. There was no doubt that conflict prevention was worthy of appropriate efforts and resources, and that the Organization should work closely with Member States and regional organizations in that regard. However, the Organization also needed to be more efficient in fulfilling its mandates.

102. Her delegation would support the establishment of regional offices, provided that the host country and all countries of the region in question had given their full prior consent. However, despite the fact that two regional offices had already been established in Dakar and Ashgabat, regional offices should not be established by adopting a "one-size-fits-all" approach and in future full information about the proper justification for opening such offices should be given.

103. The two letters circulated as official documents (A/C.5/62/24 and A/C.5/62/25) had been duly noted. In that connection, her delegation understood the concerns expressed by Member States in the former and appreciated the clarifications provided by the Secretariat in the latter. Her delegation supported the Secretariat's intention to fully respect geographical representation and gender balance while recruiting from among the best qualified candidates.

104. She shared the Advisory Committee's concerns that the proposed fragmentation of the regional divisions into a multiplicity of units by specific countries might not be the best solution. She also agreed that in some regions the work of the Department of Political Affairs should complement what had already been accomplished by the competent regional and subregional organizations.

105. **Mr. Ng'ongolo** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that conflicts in Africa usually took the form of inter-State or intra-State conflicts. The United Republic of Tanzania itself had been severely impacted by the spillover effects of intra-State conflicts. However, the strengthening of the African Union and the establishment of regional and subregional integration schemes was helping to diffuse inter-State tensions and to prevent intra-State conflicts. One of the main challenges for Africa today was thus how to prevent such devastating conflicts, which not only discouraged tourism to and direct foreign investment in Africa but which also destroyed Africa's physical economic infrastructure, thereby hindering financial activities.

106. Preventive diplomacy could make an effective contribution to the efforts of African countries and their development partners to achieve socio-economic development in Africa. His delegation therefore fully supported the proposal by the Secretary-General to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs in order to increase its capacity for preventive diplomacy. It also supported the strengthening of the Liaison Office at Addis Ababa by elevating it to the status of Peace and Security Support Office to the African Union Commission. Lastly, it welcomed the initiative by the Department of Political Affairs on measures aimed at enhancing its cooperation with regional and subregional integration schemes in Africa so as to promote peace and security in that region. Peace and security were critical to the realization of sustainable development in Africa.

107. **Mr. Alouan Kanafani** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) recalled that his delegation had already expressed its opinion on the political aspects contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/521). Those concerns had been addressed to some extent by the issuance of a corrigendum (A/62/521/Corr.1) and by the letter from the Secretary-General dated 11 March (A/C.5/62/25). He understood that the issuance of a second corrigendum had not been possible owing to time constraints and that the response contained in the Secretary-General's letter therefore represented a binding document for the purposes of negotiations. In that respect, he recognized and welcomed the readiness of the Secretary-General to address the relevant countries' concerns. However, his delegation also called on the Secretariat to provide a more detailed response than that contained in the Secretary-General's letter (A/C.5/62/25), so as to answer all of the questions raised concerning the mandate of the Department of Political Affairs.

108. Delegations should analyse the proposal before them in a comprehensive manner with a view to ensuring that the outcome reflected a balance between the three main pillars of the Organization. Furthermore, the proposed reform to strengthen the development pillar was part of the balanced approach required to reform the Secretariat and it should therefore be dealt with as a matter of priority.

109. His delegation welcomed the proposal to strengthen the political role of the Secretary-General, in view of the essential nature of his diplomatic mediation and the authority that he commanded as a world figure representing the highest values enshrined in the Charter of the Organization. In that respect, his delegation would not oppose some of the central objectives put forward in the proposal. However, some of the aspects of the proposal exceeded the scope of the Department of Political Affairs and seemed to encroach on the work of other departments, such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

110. His delegation recognized the need for resources to strengthen the regional divisions and would support the approval of such resources, provided the concerns already expressed by the Group of 77 and China and the Rio Group were taken into account. It also supported the Rio Group's proposal concerning the Americas Division, which should reflect the geographical and political realities of its subregions. Similarly, regional divisions and their respective subdivisions should have qualified staff from their own regions while also maintaining an appropriate gender balance.

111. Lastly, his delegation urged the Advisory Committee to finalize its report on the development pillar as a matter of priority so that the Fifth Committee would have sufficient time to consider that matter at the current resumed session. In that connection, it was important to point out that the fulfilment of the development mandates would have a positive impact on potential conflict situations in various regions.

112. **Mr. Coffi** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs as a major step forward in preventive diplomacy by the international community. The approach that had been adopted reflected both the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations and would help to enhance the Organization's effectiveness by providing a useful complement to peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations throughout the world. Thus, the Department of Political Affairs should provide a pre-eminent structure for supporting the good offices of the Secretary-General, relying exclusively on impartial information from the field that had been verified by credible sources.

113. His delegation drew attention to a continued failure to respect equitable geographical distribution, which particularly affected the countries of the South.

That situation was exacerbated by breaches of the administrative rules resulting in unfair human resources practices that further undermined the recruitment procedure for nationals of countries of the South. Moreover, such practices were used by political missions and peacekeeping operations to serve interests that were not always in keeping with the mandates granted by the General Assembly. In order to put paid to any accusations of bias in crisis situations, it was important for there to be no more deviations from the mandates of peacekeeping missions.

114. With a view to ensuring the success of the Department's regional presence, his delegation put forward the following proposals: recruitment and redeployment should be carried out in conformity with the rules and practices agreed upon by the competent bodies of the United Nations; lessons learned should be taken into account in order to reduce job insecurity in certain occupational categories, particularly under the 200 and 300 series; unequal geographical representation should be addressed, both the low proportion of senior staff from the countries of the South in general and from Africa in particular, and also the excessively high proportion of posts at the P-4/P-5 and D-1/D-2 levels reserved for nationals from the countries of the North; a more objective system should be put in place to evaluate United Nations staff in order to reduce the current misuse of the performance appraisal system; and the African continent should be granted all the new posts established in the Secretariat, above and beyond the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its report on strengthening the Department of Political Affairs.

115. **Mr. Safaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) recalled that the Fifth Committee had a mandate to examine the budgetary and administrative implications of the decisions taken by policymaking organs. In the present case, the Committee had been asked to discuss a proposal containing political judgements, in many instances without reference to intergovernmental mandates.

116. In the context of the current proposal, his delegation looked forward to the comprehensive report that the Secretary-General had been requested to submit to the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed sixty-third session pursuant to resolution 61/279, which would provide a better picture of the ongoing reforms. However, it would be difficult for the General Assembly to undertake a thorough discussion of proposals aimed at strengthening the Department of Political Affairs in the meantime.

117. He also drew attention to the remarks made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 23 of its report (A/62/7/Add.32) and concurred that merely adding staff was insufficient to ensure the fulfilment of mandates. The present proposal of the Secretary-General must address such issues. Furthermore, any genuine and serious efforts to enhance the role of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy must tackle the root causes of conflict and search for ways to achieve sustainable development and sustained economic growth. Such efforts should also be in full accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and should fully respect the national sovereignty and independence of Member States.

118. Lastly, with regard to the establishment of regional offices, the United Nations should seek the express consent of the host country and all countries in the region prior to the establishment of any regional office; Member States should decide on the establishment of regional offices on a case-by-case basis; a regional office should not have an extraterritorial mandate; and there should be no uniform formula for the establishment of regional offices.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.